

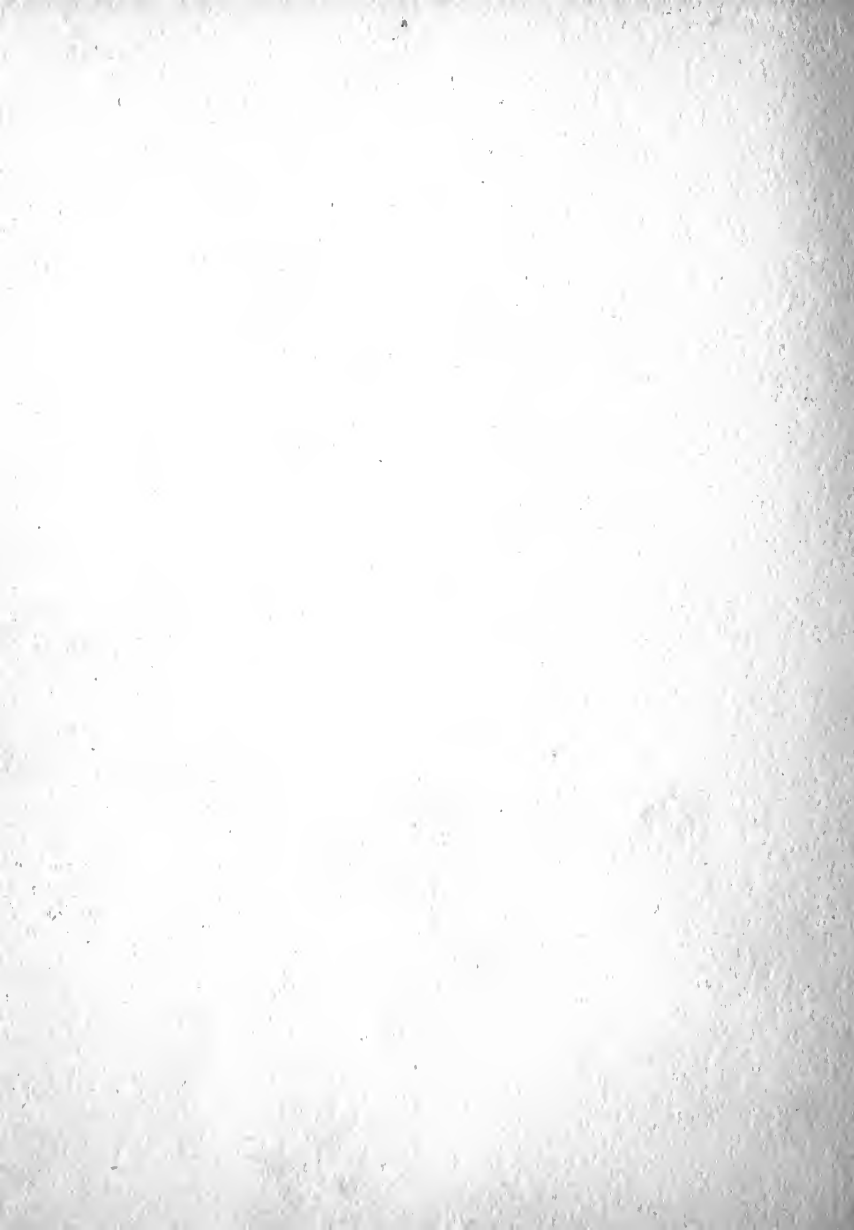
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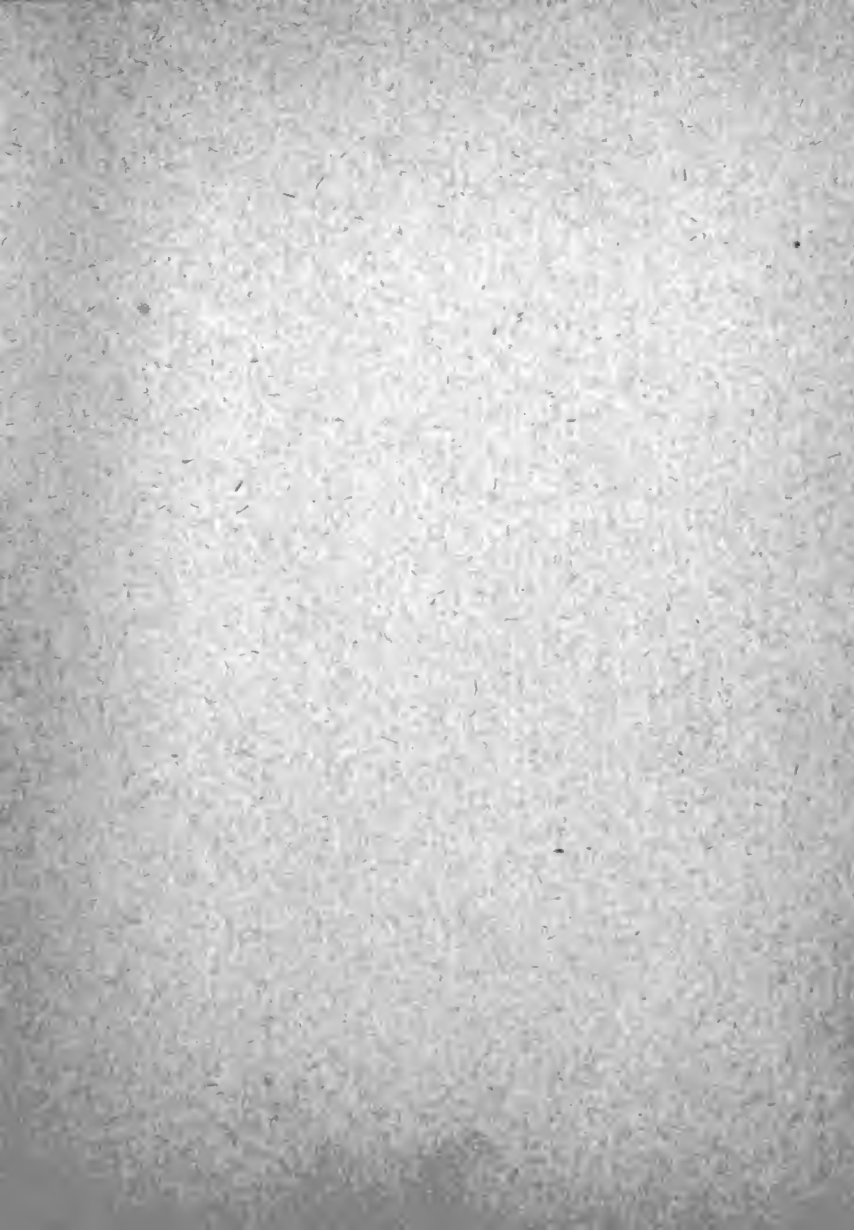
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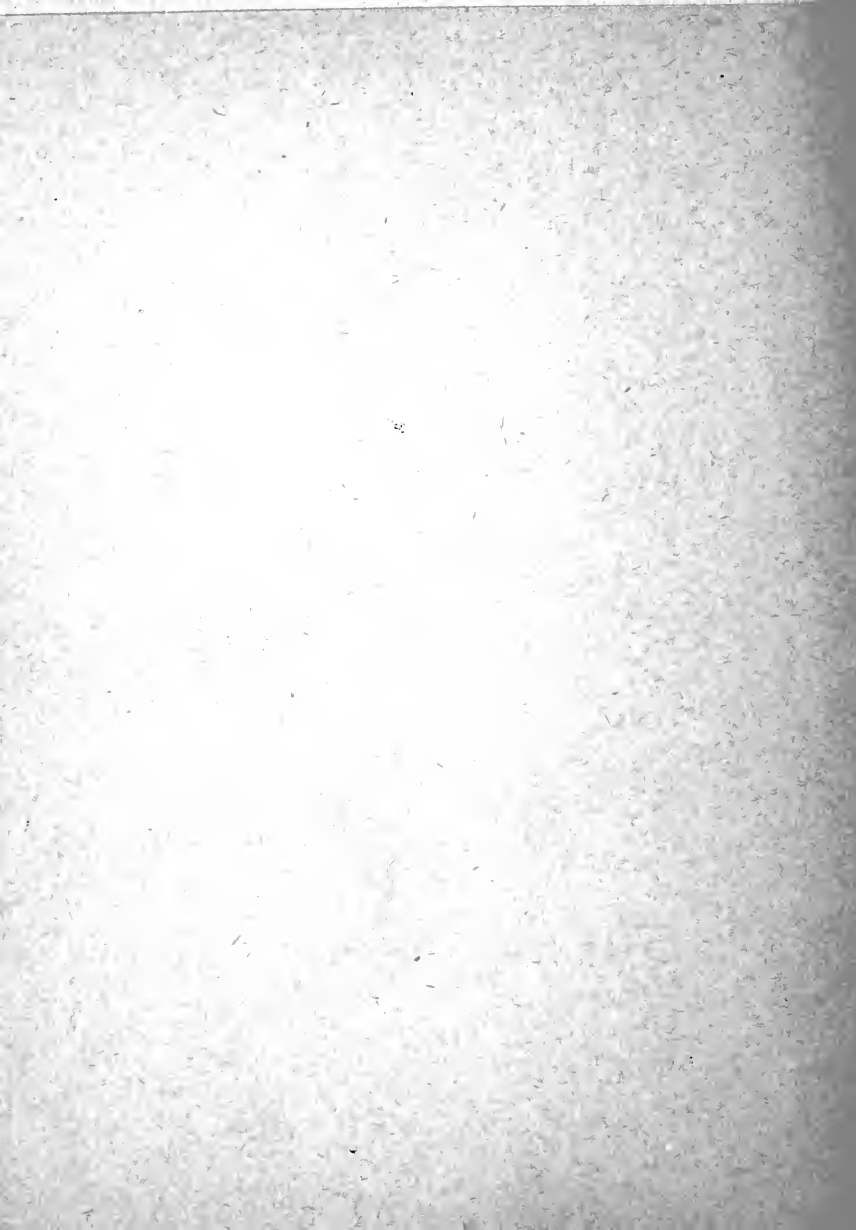
THE

RUSTIC MAIDEN.

Walker







“RITA”

THE

RUSTIC MAIDEN,

—:o: BY :o:—



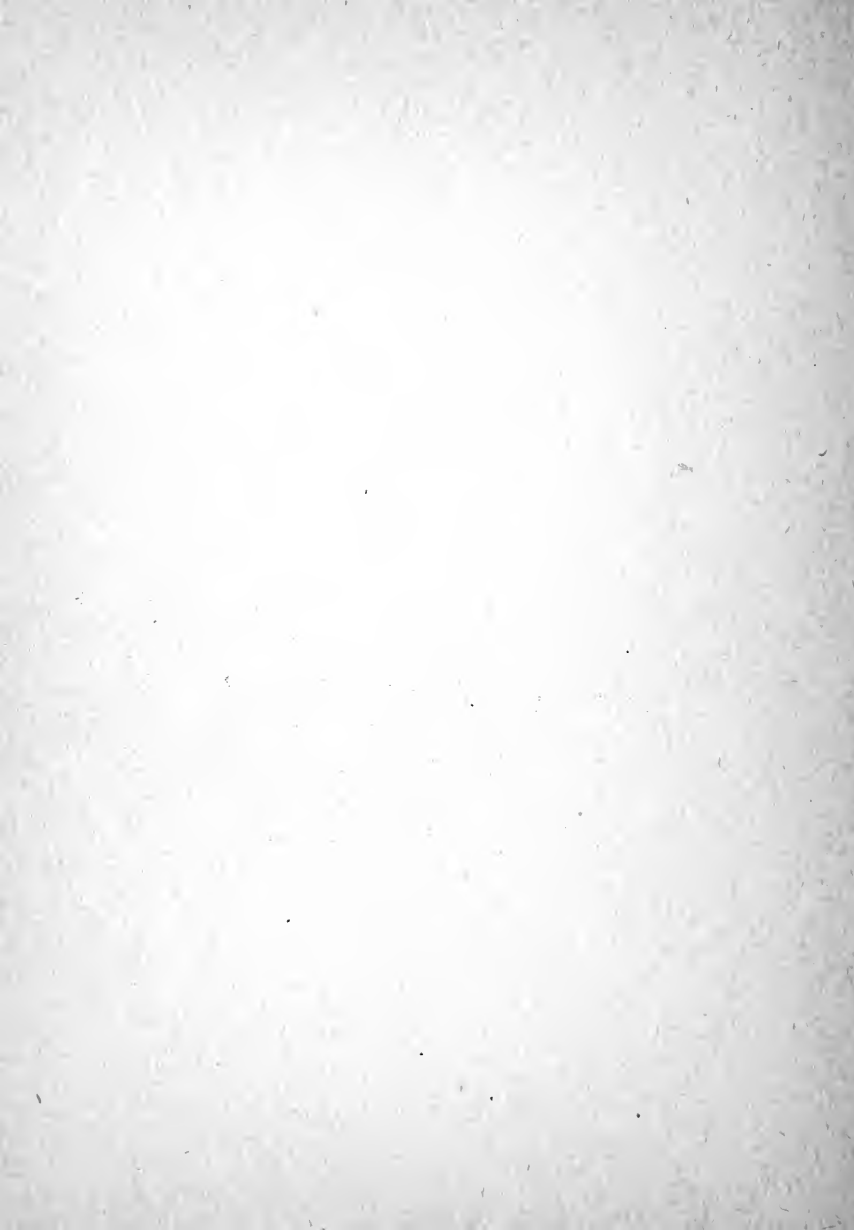
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Mrs E. P. WALKER.

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Rita the Rustic Maiden,

— BY —

E. P. WALKER.



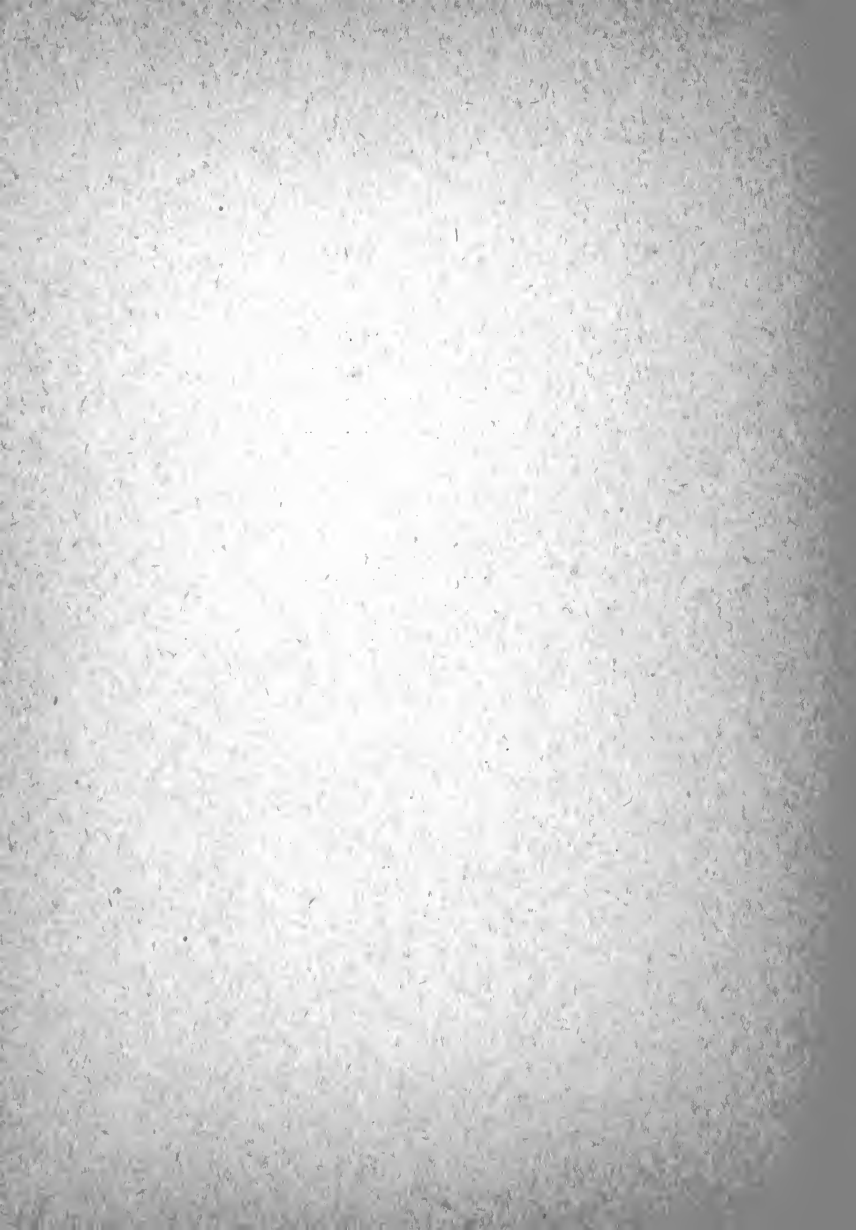
IN a meadow one golden morn—
Clear sky and balmy air—
Stood a blithe maiden culling corn,
Whose face was more than fair.

Swiftly tripping through the glades,
Ankles bare and white in view,
Picking up the bright green blades,
In a plain dress, neat and blue.

Hair in ringlets—black as jet,
Eyes—blue as the sky above ;
With every one she is a pet—
Within that quiet home of love.

Dew-dripped daisies at her feet,
Corn in bunches here and there,
Like a Naiad—pale and sweet—
Rita moved in morning air.

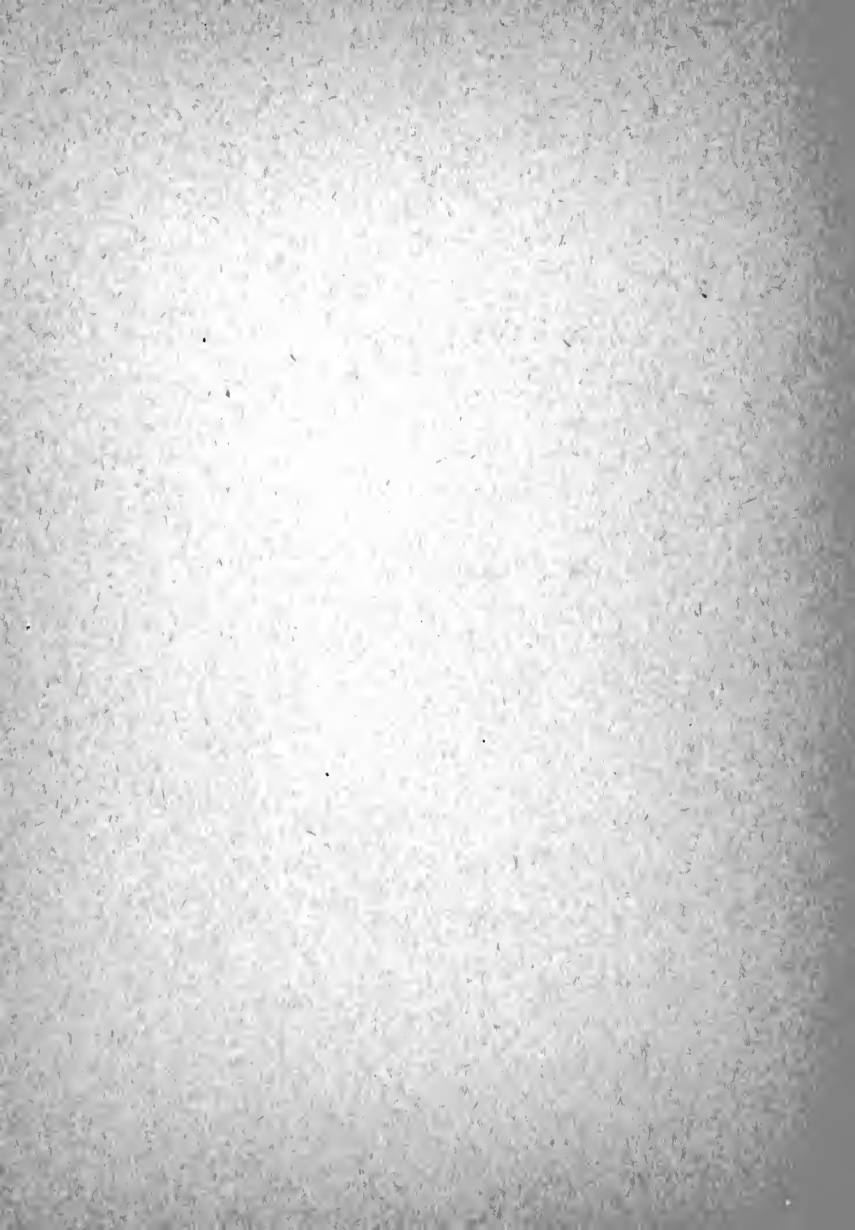
Ernest, by fancy was led that way,
Object none save the Autumn morn,
And in his path like a silver ray,
Stood the maiden culling corn.



Gazed he long, and pondered slow,
At the vision of delight,
Saying, "I will speak and meekly bow,
As a loyal courtier might."

Then to her said: "Can I help thee?
I can all thy burden bear,
Gladly will, if you let me,
Both your work and trouble share."

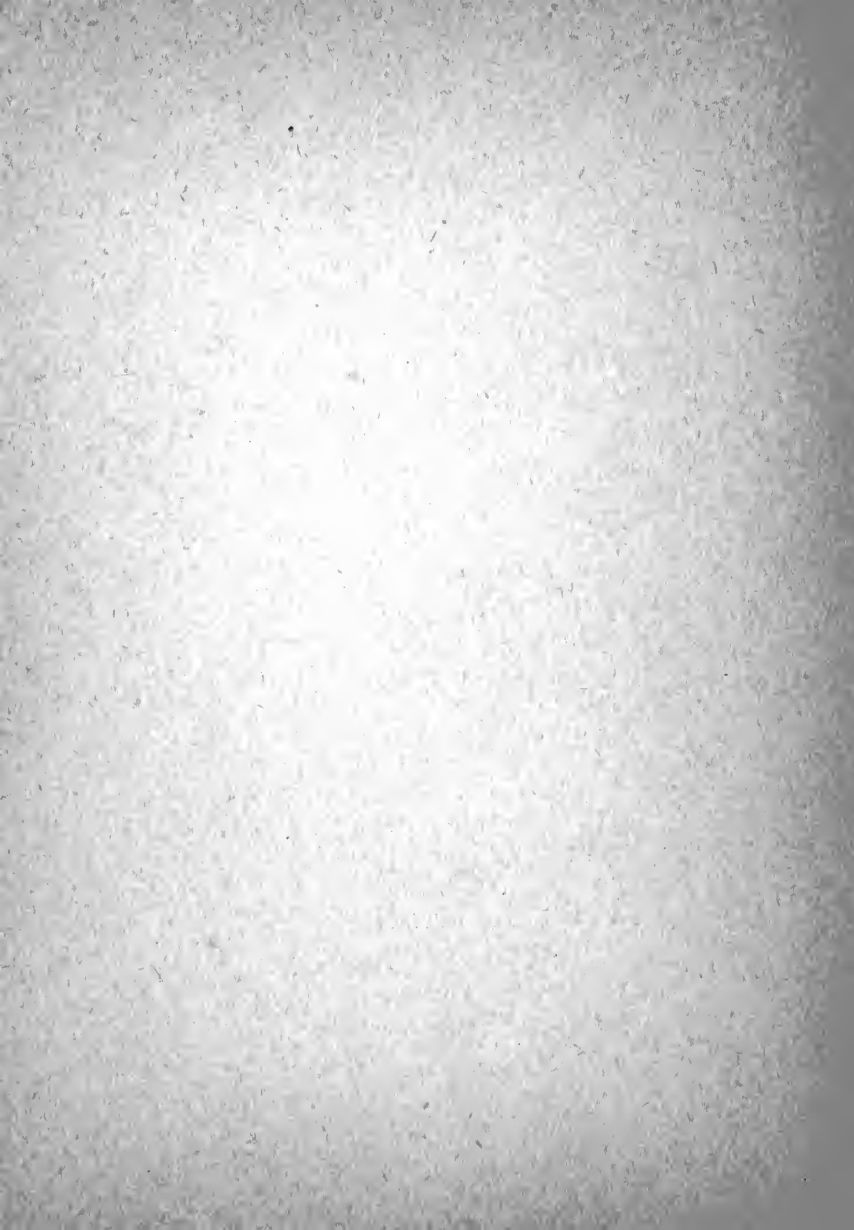
Stood he very near her side,
Manners courtly, polished, pure—
Thinking, near her to abide—
And the beaming sun endure.



Shy the maiden speaks at last,
And her voice was like the dove,
"Toil is light and soon is past,
When one works for mother's love."

Fancy's flight does not entrance her,
She is called a true Ceres,
Knowing well the Lord will guide her—
As he does the little bees.

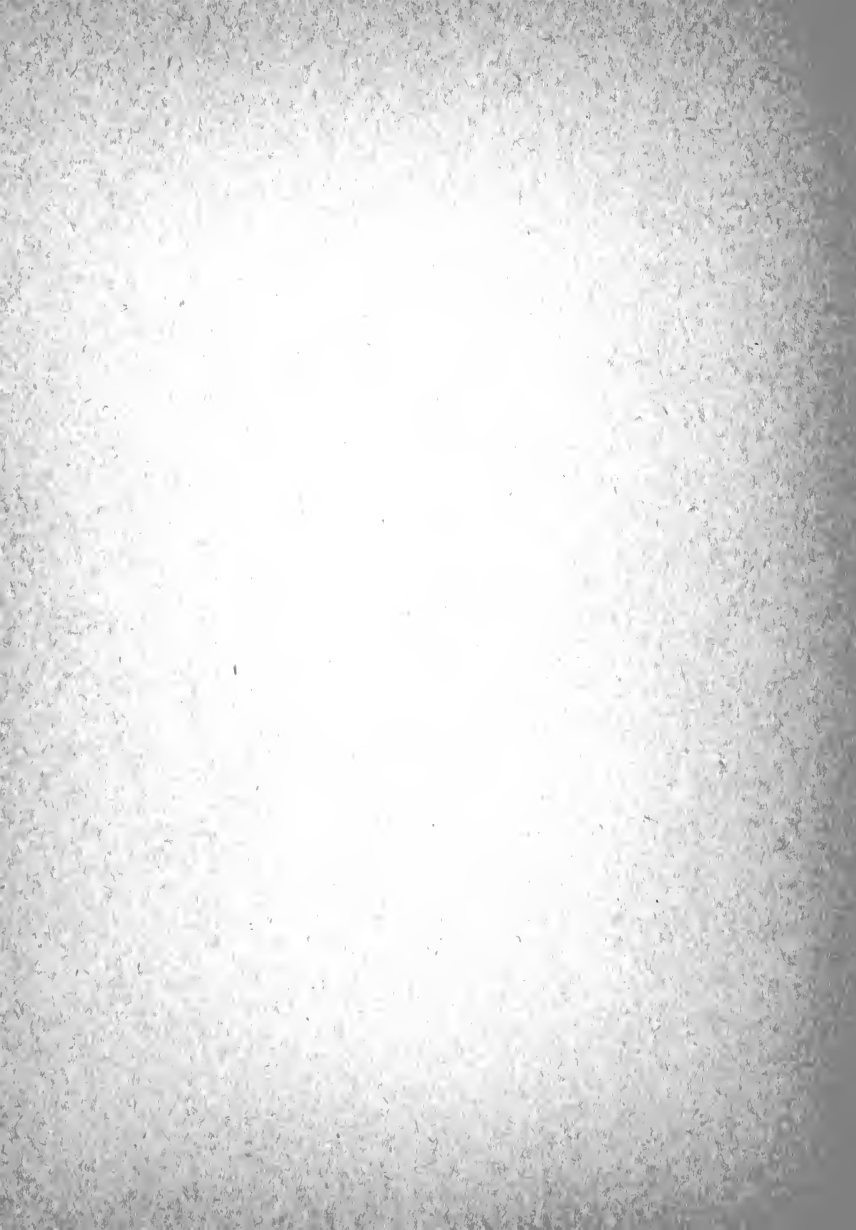
"Have I sisters? Yes, sir, many,
And I work for mother's need,
For them earn the penny,
And help her much indeed.



She is often sick and weak,
Papa dear is far at sea,
In my prayers to God I speak
Oft of him, and he of me."

Love and duty—which is right?—
Symbols of the brave and true—
Casting shadows in the night,
And blessing all of you.

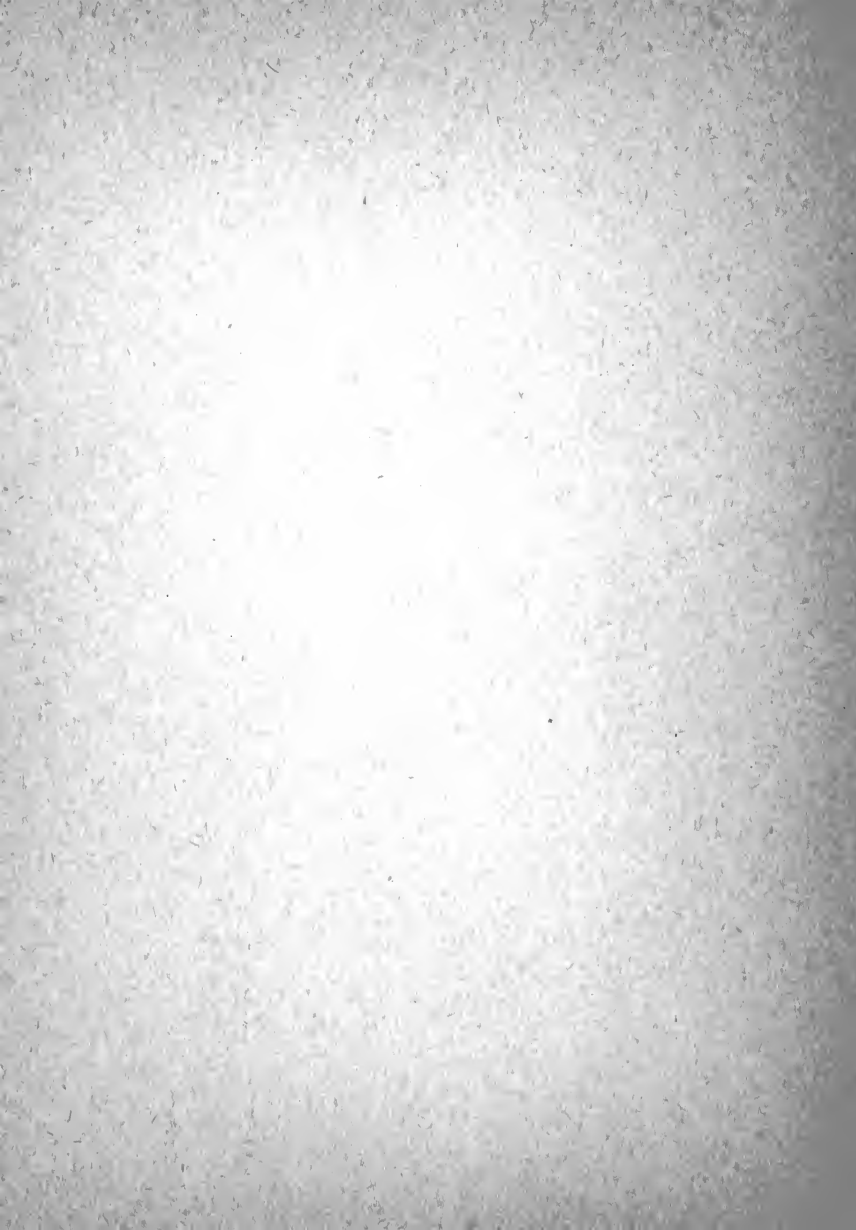
Working early, toiling late,
Near the haunts of sweet Bob-white,
Even rabbits forget fate—
When sweet Rita's form 's in sight.



Day by day the young man wandered,
In the path of Rita's task—
Dreaming dreams and sweetly pondered—
How the old, old question ask.

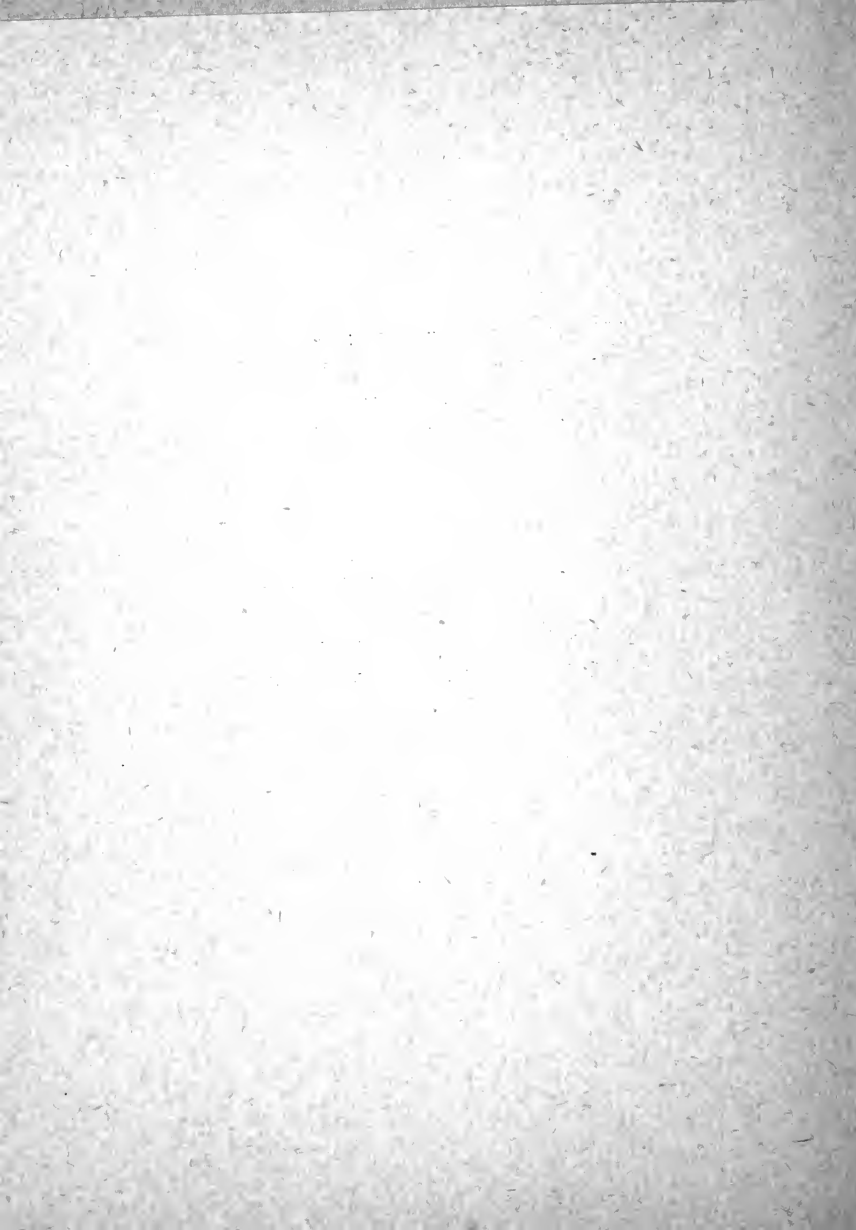
Till at length in dire distress,
With so much loving spoke he once more,
“Will you come and make me blessed,
I will love you o'er and o'er.”

Lingered he till daylight ended,
And the eve was free from care,
Then to Rita's home he wended,
Wishing to stay ever there.



"Mother," to the matron spoke he,
 "Take me now a son to be,
For I love your Rita dearly,
 Let her share her home with me.

Want and toil shall never enter,
 And the wolf shall flee your door,"
Her reply—"we will not sever,
 I'll trust you now forever more."



"SWEET ARBUTUS." Song.

"BAY RIDGE." Song Schottisch.

BY MRS. E. P. WALKER.

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